

HIPPIRA



Written by
KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Illustrated by
SHINJI KIMURA

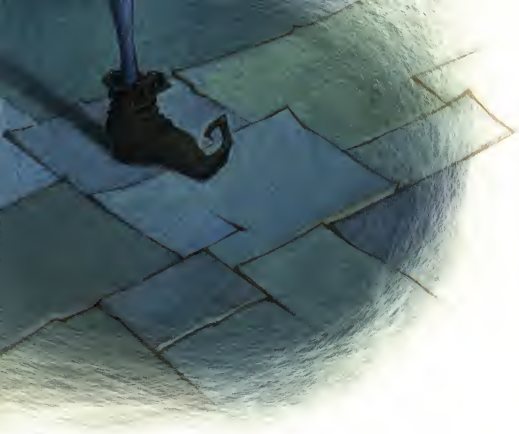


In the vampire city of Saruta, the sun never rises
and all the vampire children love to stay up late.
Hipira is a precocious young vampire whose best
friend is a fairy named Soul, and their games,
pranks, and adventures are extraordinary even
for the inhabitants of this supernatural city.



HIPRA

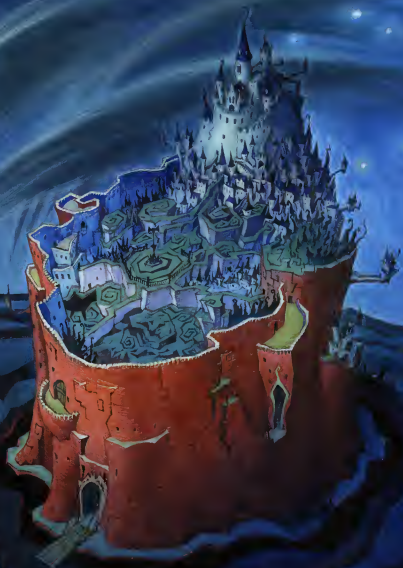






My name is Hipira.
The truth is, I'm a vampire!
Everybody had better be really afraid of me!

This is the town of Salta.
It's surrounded by a high, high wall,
and only vampires live here.
It's always nighttime here, and morning never comes,
so it's the kind of town kids dream about,
if they're the type who love to stay up late.



The Tale of Soul

Right now in Salta,
there are lots of rumors going around
about the city's oldest "Town Elder"
and the mysteries of the castle he lives in.



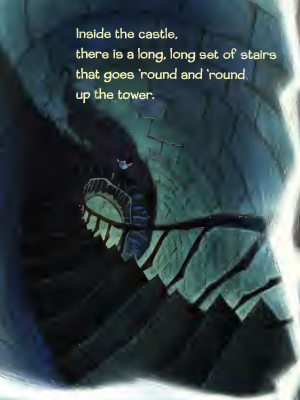


There are always strange lights
beaming out from the castle's windows.



All right!
Time to explore!

Inside the castle,
there is a long, long set of stairs
that goes 'round and 'round
up the tower.



On the wall, portraits of the Town
Elder's father and grandfather...



...and their grandfathers
are all staring at me!
Yikes!



Now I'm right in front of the Elder's room.
Light is spilling out, and I can hear some
kind of magic spell being cast inside!
Let's take a peek and see...



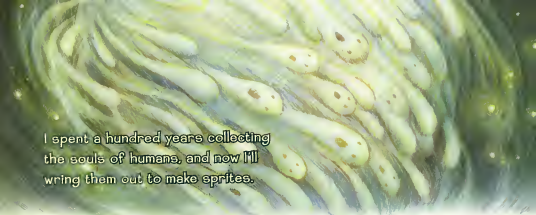


Siri!


What is this thing?

It's like a big ice
cream cone of lights!

Oh, Hipira!
This here is a
vortex of spirits!



I spent a hundred years collecting
the souls of humans, and now I'll
wring them out to make sprites.



If we drink the blood of
those sprites,
we vampires get
to go to hell.

'Cause when it comes to
vampires, hell is heaven!
Now watch, Hipira!

It looks like something's
being created out of
the tip of the vortex...



Heave-ho! Crank!
Quickly, Hipira!
Keep turning it!

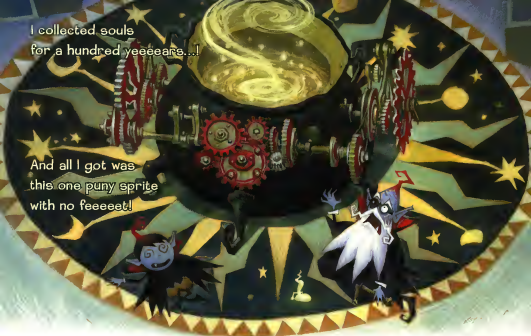
AAH!






Come on... Just a little bit more, a little more...
All that's left is for it to sprout feet...
CRACK!!
We broke it...!

PLOP... The sprite tumbled to the
ground before it could grow legs!



I collected souls
for a hundred yeeeeeears...!

And all I got was
this one puny sprite
with no feeeeeeet!



Boo hoo hoo! Boo hoo hoo!
The Town Elder broke down
and cried a shower of tears.



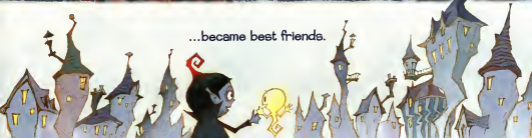
Hi, my name's Soul.
Pleased to meet you!



But after that,
Hipira and Soul...



...became best friends.



Cock-A-Doodle-Do!

Hipirai Let's play!!





BWAH!

Scary, aren't I?

That's pretty
funny, Hipiral

Aww, no fun!

You're supposed to be afraid!

Yeah, but...

Mom and Dad haven't
gotten up yet, so
they're no fun either!!

Come on!!

It's time to practice flying!

Flap flap flap flap flap.





Everyone, wake up!
Cock-a-doodle-doo!

Wake up! Wake up!
Time to get up,
Dad!
Time to get up,
Mom!
Wake uuuuuup!
BONG! BONG!

In the vampire town of Salta where morning never comes,
it had, in fact, been 2000 years since they'd last heard
the rooster's cry announcing morning.

What's happening?
Is it morning?

Save us!

Run away! AAA!



Yawwwwn! I had
a good sleep!

Oh my!
What's Hipira
doing here...?

But Hipira had gone to
sleep without waiting for
everyone else to wake up.



Cock-a-doodle-dool
It's morning!!
AAH! It's Hipiral
Why, you--!
You stop that,
even in your dreams!

The Frog Prince

This is the entrance to the forest at the back of the town of Salta. Hipira and Soul have come here to play.






Sniff sniff!

What's wrong?
Why are you crying?

I am
a brier pixie.
Sniff sniff.



The water of the river has stopped flowing,
so the oldest briar tree in the forest
is starting to wither up and die.

What in the world could have happened?
Let's go see what we can find, Soull

Oh!!
It's true!

Look, Hiralal
There's something over there!

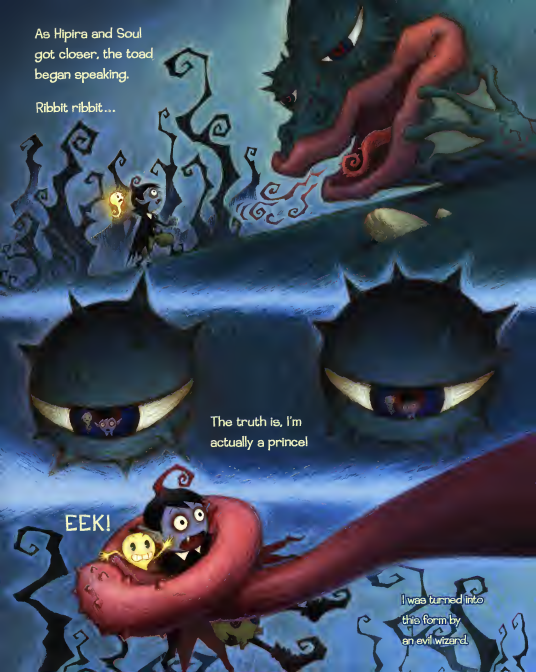
AAAAH!

AIYAIYAI!



What they found there was a gigantic sleeping toad blocking off the river.

Boy, you really scared us!



As Hipira and Soul
got closer, the toad
began speaking.

Ribbit ribbit...

The truth is, I'm
actually a prince!

EEK!

I was turned into
this form by
an evil wizard.



AAH!

But if I eat lots of sprites
and vampires, I can turn
back the way I was.
Dinner time!

Before you eat us,
we'll eat you!

And so Hipira and Soul
chomped down
on the toad's tongue.

It was too much
for the big toad
to take.

Without thinking, the toad leaped up, and all the river water he had been damming up behind his back came gushing out.



I don't feel so gooood!



F'WOOSH F'WOOSH F'WOOSH

SPLAT

BLAT



Hooray!

Hooray!



It wasn't really the fault of some wizard at all. He just got big from drinking too much river water!



And he isn't a prince either!

He doesn't even look like a frog, does he?

Why, you, Hiptira...!


I'll get even with you someday...




School Is Fun

Today Hipira is at
school studying.






In order to become
distinguished vampires...



...it is most necessary
that you learn about
vampire history!



This here is a portrait
of our forefather,
Count Dracula.

ZZZ

And here he
is in person.

YAY! YAY!

Here, you lot!
Pipe down, now!



Look! Even
Hipira there
is studying.

Oh! It's true!
I can't believe it!


You see! Even Hipira does what he's
supposed to, when he's been told!

THUMPTHUMPTHUMPTHUM



COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO!

Oh!
It's Hipiral!



Then who in the world is this?!

It's Soul!!



COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO!

Why, you!

Him again!

Behave yourself!

It's Hipiral

A New Friend



Hipira! The condition
of this orrery
has been pretty
bad off late...

The reason being that the
thing's over 200 years old!

Orrery: A clockwork model that illustrates
the movements of the stars and planets.

Yeah, I know! Like that time
it projected three moons
and everyone panicked, right?



And at the moment—

CRASH!

THOOM

The sky tore open and
something's crashed
in, Soull!

What in the
world is it?!





What? What is it?
It's a meteorite!

Aah! We're in
trouble, Hipira!

Huh? What's wrong?



It's the sun!
The sun's light
is shining in!!





If it hits us, it'll turn
us vampires to ash,
and we'll die!

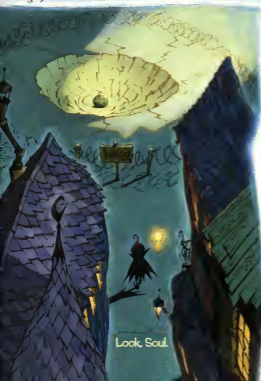
Aaah!
Run away!



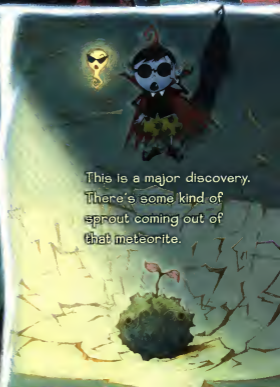
What do we
do now...?



And so after that,
sunglasses became
all the rage in
the town of Salta.



Look, Soul.



This is a major discovery.
There's some kind of
sprout coming out of
that meteorite.

We'll just have to
water it for now.



The sprout
got sunlight
and water...

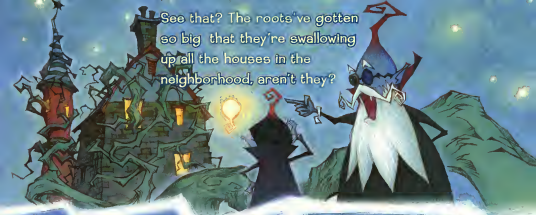


...and kept growing
bigger and bigger.




AIEEE!!
Who's the one
who made this
thing so big?!

Yes, Sir! It was me, Hipira,
and Soul. We did our best
to bring it up right!




See that? The roots've gotten so big that they're swallowing up all the houses in the neighborhood, aren't they?



All right! Let's climb up and take a look around, Soul.

But look, Sir. The leaves are covering up the hole in the sky for us!

Hmm...



Oh! It's grown a fruit!
And there's something
inside it, isn't there?



I sure hope he gets
born soon...

Then maybe
he can be our
friend, Soul.



Look, Hipira!
Over there, too...



AAAAH!
They're
everywhere!!



POP!

Yawwwn!
I'm hungry!

What a
huge mouth!

MUNCH MUNCH

CHOMP CHOMP

Oh, no!
If they keep going like
this, they'll end up eating
the entire town of Salta!



We've gotta
warn everyone!

MUNCH MUNCH

MUNCH MUNCH



I am the Alien Vacuum!
TA-DAA!

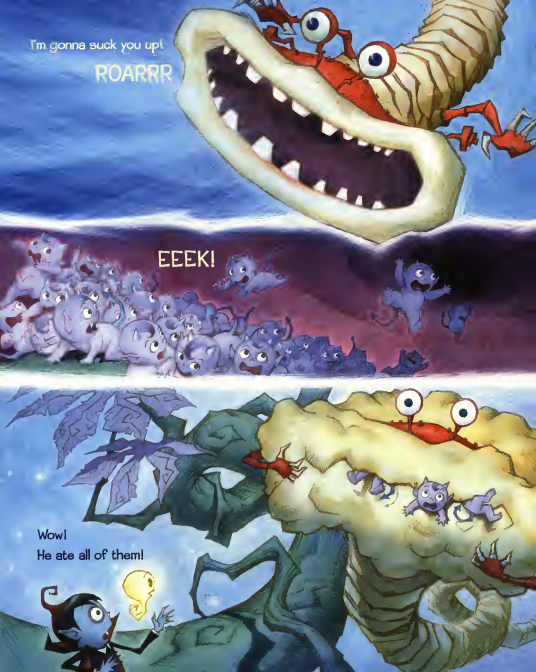
At that moment, something
suddenly appeared from the hole
that the leaves had been covering up.

I'm gonna suck you up!

ROARRR

EEEEK!

Wow!
He ate all of them!





Shall we go home?



Those kids were pretty
cute, though, weren't they?





PLOP

Yawn!

Yikes!
There's still one here!

Well, we've got a new friend now,
don't we, Soul?

What should we name
him, Hpira...?

The End

KATSUHIRO OTOMO is known for his groundbreaking work as an artist, writer, and filmmaker. Otomo's graphic novel *Domu*, his major work, became a bestseller in Japan in 1983 and was the first manga to win the coveted Science Fiction Grand Prix Award, Japan's equivalent to America's Nebula Award. Upon completion of *Domu*, Otomo began work on *Akira*, an epic graphic novel that would be ten years in the making and would go on to win every possible award and become regarded as one of the crown jewels of graphic fiction. With the completion of *Akira*, Otomo began his odyssey as a filmmaker, directing the acclaimed animated *Akira* adaptation. Otomo has gone on to direct a number of films, both animated and live-action, and commercials. Otomo's latest film, *Steamboy*, is the most expensive film production in the history of Japanese animation. Otomo lives and works in Tokyo.

SHINJI KIMURA is one of Japan's most respected film production artists, creating dazzling background paintings and production designs for a number of popular animated films. Kimura began working at Kobayashi Productions and now works as a freelance artist/director. Some of his major credits in background art include *Urusei Yatsura 2: Beautiful Dreamer*, *Lupin the Third: The Plot of the Fuhma Clan*, and the beloved classic *My Neighbor Totoro*. Kimura met Katsuhiro Otomo as an art director on *Steamboy*, which led to their collaboration on *Hipira*. Kimura lives and works in Tokyo.



